(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the hospitals proposed to be handed over to private sector have been identified by Government; and

(d) if so, the names of such hospitals and the names of places in the country where new hospitals are planned to be constructed during the current year?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Compulsory Mentioning of 'Best Before' on Packed Food Items

† 2843. SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have made it compulsory to mention *best before' on all the packed food items to inform the consumers about the best for use before a particular date;

(b) whether Government have issued an ordinance in this regard; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE [DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA]: (a) to (c) The Government have amended Prevention of Food Adulteration (PFA) Rules 1955 *vide* Notification No. GSR 537(E) dated 13-6-2000, which will come into force w.e.f.1st September, 2000 whereby the date upto which the product is best for consumption shall be mentioned on label of all packages of food, except packages containing confectionery weighing 20 gm or less. In the case of Aspartame, Infant Milk Substitute and Infant food also this requirement will

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

not be necessary as they are already required to indicate the "Use before" or expiry date.

Improving Health Infrastructure

2844. SHRI BJ. PANDA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to provide better health facilities to the people in the country;

(b) whether Government proposes to privatise major hospitals in the country for the purpose; and

(c) what other steps are being taken to improve health infrastructure in the country, both in rural and urban areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE [DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA]: (a) Government is continuously taking measures to provide better health facilities to the people in the country.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Creating health infrastructure for providing health care in rural/urban areas is the responsibility of the State Governments. A vast network of rural health infrastructure has been established throughout the country to provide preventive, promotive and curative health care in rural areas. However, Central Government has been making every effort to mobilise substantial resources from bilateral/ multilateral agencies for intensifying the implementation of National Health Programmes namely, the control of HIV/AIDS, Malaria, T.B., Leprosy, Blindness and promotion of Reproductive and Child Health. Besides, for upgrading the rural hospitals in selected States, World Bank assistance has been availed of, which would further improve delivery of health services.

Sale of Blood by IRCS

2845. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item